ശ്രേയസ്

ഭാരതത്തിന്റെ ആദ്ധ്യാത്മികജ്ഞാനവും സാംസ്കാരികപൈതൃകവും പരിപോഷിപ്പിക്കുകയും പ്രചരിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന മഹദ്ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ, അവയുടെ മൂല്യവും വ്യക്തതയും ഒട്ടും ചോർന്നുപോകാതെതന്നെ, നൂതന സാങ്കേതികവിദ്യ ഉപയോഗിച്ച് പരിരക്ഷിക്കുകയും ജിജ്ഞാസുകൾക്ക് സൗജന്യമായി പകർന്നുകൊടുക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുക എന്ന ശ്രേയസ് ഫൗണ്ടേഷന്റെ ലക്ഷ്യ സാക്ഷാത്കാരമാണ് ശ്രേയസ് ഓൺലൈൻ ഡിജിറ്റൽ ലൈബ്രറി.

ഗ്രന്ഥശാലകളുടെയും ആദ്ധ്യാത്മിക പ്രസ്ഥാനങ്ങളുടെയും വ്യക്തികളുടെയും സഹകരണത്തോടെ കോർത്തിണക്കിയിരിക്കുന്ന ഈ ഓൺലൈൻ ലൈബ്രറിയിൽ അപൂർവ്വങ്ങളായ വിശിഷ്ടഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ സ്കാൻചെയ്ത് മികവാർന്ന ചെറിയ പി ഡി എഫ് ഫയലുകളായി ലഭ്യമാക്കിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇവ കമ്പ്യൂട്ടറിലോ പ്രിന്റ് ചെയ്തോ എളുപ്പത്തിൽ വായിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്.

ശ്രേയസ് ഓൺലൈൻ ഡിജിറ്റൽ ലൈബ്രറിയിൽ ലഭ്യമായ ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ വ്യക്തിപരമായ ആവശ്യങ്ങൾക്കുവേണ്ടി സൗജന്യമായി ഉപയോഗിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. എന്നാൽ വാണിജ്യപരവും മറ്റുമായ കാര്യങ്ങൾക്കായി ഇവ ദുരുപയോഗം ചെയ്യുന്നത് തീർച്ചയായും അനുവദനീയമല്ല.

ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥശേഖരത്തിന് മുതൽക്കൂട്ടായ ഈ പുണ്യഗ്രന്ഥത്തിന്റെ രചയിതാവിനും പ്രകാശകർക്കും നന്ദി രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു.

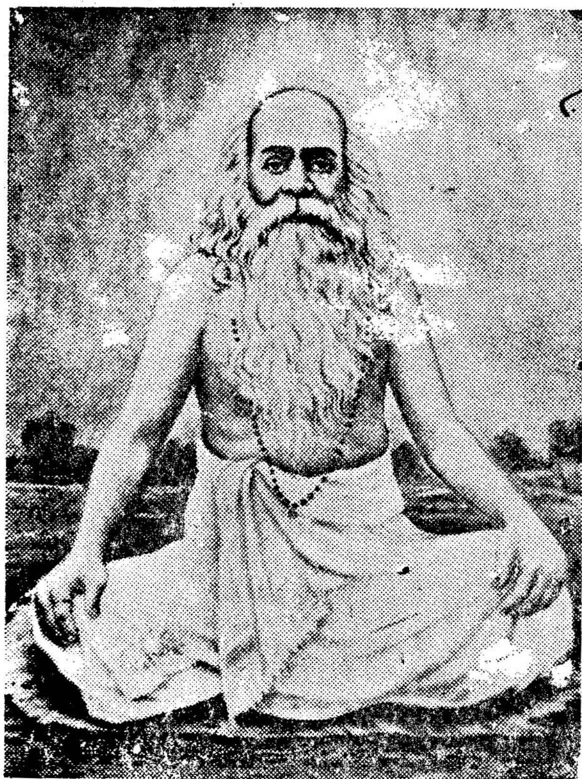
ശ്രേയസ് ഓൺലൈൻ ഡിജിറ്റൽ ലൈബ്രറിയെക്കുറിച്ചും ശ്രേയസ് ഫൗണ്ടേഷനെക്കുറിച്ചും കൂടുതൽ വിവരങ്ങൾ അറിയാനും പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിൽ പങ്കാളിയാകാനും ശ്രേയസ് വെബ്സൈറ്റ് സന്ദർശിക്കുക.

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CHATTAMBI SWAMIGAL

The great scholar-saint of Kerala



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CHATTAMBI SWAMIGAL

[The great scholar-saint of Kerala]

1853-1924

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

BY

K. P. K. MENON M. A., Ph. D.

Published by

P. G. NARAYANA PILLAI

TRIVANDRUM

1967

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First Edition 1967—2000 Copies
Printed at the Educational Art Press, Trivandrum-4
Price Re. 1
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Published by
P. G. Narayana Pillai, Perumbavoor.

Distributors :

(1) Sri Vidyadhiraja Paper Dealers.
Trivandrum-1

(2) Sri Balabhattaraka Ashram,
Panmana (Kerala).

(3) Sreenivas Stores,
Perumbavoor (Kerala).

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CONTENTS

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PREFATORY NOTE

There are many biographies of Chattambi Swamigal in Malayalam — biographies long and short, in prose and in verse. But there is no book in English to enable people outside Kerala to learn about his life and work. This short brochure is aimed at supplying this want so that the lustre of his greatness may spread more extensively than it does now.

In the preparation of this booklet I am most indebted to Sri K. Bhaskara Pillai whose excellent biography of Chattambi Swamigal in Malayalam has proved to be an invaluable source-book.

23-2-'67 K. P. K. MENON.

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FOREWORD

A great soul and an equally brilliant mind, Chattambi Swamigal was a remarkable religious peripatetic who lived in the historic Travancore State from 1853 to 1924. He used to spend most of his time at Trivandrum during his last years. In my youth when I was staying there studying in the Maharaja's College I have heard his astonished and appreciative contemporaries describing his unusual accomplishments.

Genius manifests itself in a space-time context expressing itself in its own idiom and local dialect. But the universal note in it is unmistakable. Chattambi Swami's religious quest and discovery, his austere simplicity and great self-denial, his humble sharing with others the light with which he was illumined, and above all his loving tenderness for all living creatures, as illustrated by the many anecdotes reproduced in this brochure, are inspiring for all time.

The Swamigal was not a propagandist or organizer in the modern sense of the word. He

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strictly adhered to the characteristic virtues of an ideal hermit practising ahimsa, satya, asteya, brahmacharya and aparigraha (non-injury, truthfulness, not taking anything by stealth, sexual continence, and living without acquisition) as an exemplar of this mode of life. His religious influence opened the vision of many and gave self-confidence to innumerable people, leaving a mark in the religious attitude of a large section of people in the Travancore area.

Born and brought up in penury and privations, Chattambi Swamigal became a master-mind by his own inborn genius and prodigious intellectual industry. Schooling in the last century was the luxury of the few and beyond the reach of the poor in Kerala, where now literacy and educational opportunities are ahead of most of the other states in India. Access to traditional lore conserved in Sanskrit was also impeded by narrow conventions. In spite of these difficulties Chattmabi Swamigal mastered many branches of indigenous learning and acquired skill in music and arts. His painstaking study of Tamil and Sanskrit from competent teachers outside the state gave him a command over Vedanta. His gifted mind found no rest

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till his proficiency in yoga measured up to ostensible results.

Transport and communication was very crude in those days. Power-propelled vehicles were not on the roads and airway travel was not within imagination. It was in such a period that this stalwart seeker trudged many many miles in search of knowledge, and when he got it, he wandered again as the inspirer of people. Hardly was there at that time in the country liberal education that assured an enlargement of the mind beyond one's own clan or known neighbourhood, because not many went out of their own home county or Zilla. People sparsely mixed even with many of their neighbours because of social distance. If rarely a person returned after university education in the presidency-capital or beyond the seas he was looked on as an exhibit. That was the local condition when Chattambi Swamigal strove to extend egalitarian doctrines or liberalize traditional religious rituals and doctrines by his writings and example.

Though Chattambi Swamigal was an anticipator of many liberal trends he was not a

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pledged social reformer under whose ferocious zeal religion is usually the first casualty. While exposing sacerdotal pretensions and demolishing the ignorant claims of the high-ups in the ladder of caste hierarchy, in his polemical writings, he never excited inter-communal envy or bickerings; he was urged by a sense of historical justice rather than personal pride. By birth though he was occupying a stair somewhat up in the caste ladder he saw through the artificiality and absurdity of it and always extended his hands to those below him to raise them up. His vision of unity (samadarsana) was the outcome of his Vedantic conviction that *Atman* is *Brahman*, each man is potentially Divine, that all existence is One—the essence of Vedantic wisdom.

I have much pleasure in introducing to a wider public the life-story of this meritorious personality presented for the first time in English, written by Dr. K. P. Karunakara Menon, with much care and selective insight.

Saints are the common property of humanity. By making the necessary efforts to

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make available a knowledge of their life and ideas prevalent in one region in others also, across the barrier of language and time, we aid in the emotional integration of the nation and even of mankind. May this slim volume fulfil this end in its own measure!

Mahasivaratri day,
1967.

SWAMI VIMALANANDA.

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SECRET INITIATION

It must have been in the early twenties, I only have a very dim, vague, memory. And yet, the flashes that rise in my bosom are unfailingly clear. They have been my silent inspiration. They have helped me more often than I dare to confess.

It cannot be explained; because it all happened when I was only three, or perhaps, four years old. I remember the unique smell of the long, white beard, the rough hairy chest, and the rounded soft belly. This I remember clearly of Sri Chattambi Swamigal, in the early twenties. He used to be a regular visitor to our house in Ernakulam, and my Mother tells me it was his usual practice to lay me on his chest and lie down on a cot and prattle away to the child. The child in his turn, I am told, used to prattle back, and thus long periods of quiet communication used to be between the great Swamigal and the innocent child. As the child was being rocked up and down in a vertical position, on the bosom, Sri Swamigal was in the habit of rolling his head at the neck from right to left. All those who knew him, can remember this happy pose of this unique Master.

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It was this simple picture, drawn in my memory, that did often return, again and again, to help me on the path of my life. It contained for me a testimony, a testament and an ever-green hope, all in one, for all times.

It seems that my Mother had often wondered at and asked the Swamigal, "What exactly are you telling him, and what is the language you both use?" Mother now tells me that the Swamigal did answer her: "He understands it all, why do you interfere with us?' These are all the reminiscences that I can report. Is it all true? Is there communication possible between a silver–bearded Master and an uninitiated infant? Whatever else there might have been in my early life, there was no spirituality or religion apparently evident, and yet, twentyfive years ago, when I was in my early twenties, I can look back now and declare that, suddenly, from nowhere, a spiritual urge and a religious hunger took me by storm, and in one tidal wave sustained me for ten short years' in Utterkasi, only to leave me back, again, on the shores of the Indian Hindu metropolis, to preach, to serve, and to convert the Hindus to Hinduism.

My teacher Sri Swami Tapovanam had a great reverence for Sri Chattambi Swamigal, and

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it is in fact from Sri Gurudev that I heard so often of the spiritual and mystical glory of this rare Sage of Kerala.

The total impression that is left in me by this great scholar-saint, who chose to remain incognito all the time, in his own native land, is his sunshine of laughter, his irrepressible joy......can I say ecstasy? I don't know. But whenever I have looked back and relived my short contact with the Swamigal, there is always a fragrant atmosphere of peace and ease, love and loveliness, that springs up in my bosom.

Sri Chattambi Swamigal has been one of the constant altars at which I have, day by day, surrendered and invoked endless streams of power and strength. His long nails, which he preserved for playing the Veena,—and I vividly remember how he used to play the rhythm of the drums on the top of the table,...have often, I have felt, patted me on my back.

These are all, to me, extremely sacred secrets and I feel bashful to tell them in public, but when I am approached by the publishers, who are bringing out a volume of the Life and Works of this rare genius, whose spiritual stature is unmatched with any of the greatest men I have so far

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met, I can but indicate these precious moments, and offer them as my humble homage at the altar of this "Majesty of Knowledge." What I am to-day capable of in serving the world, I firmly believe, I owe to this unique Sage. Many are the streams of influences that have reached me, to mould me. It seems that I had a secret initiation at the hands of the Swamigal, who accomplished this marvel in a tiny baby, perhaps, then only a thousand days old in the world.

With prostrations to this Yogi of Yogis,

Hindu Cultural Association
Malayasia, 16th March 1967

SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA.

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GLORY OF THE SAGE

The world forgetting, the world renouncing, he lives a life of *leela* to redeem and reform the world.

The why, the whence and whither he knows, of souls ensheathed in mortal frames.

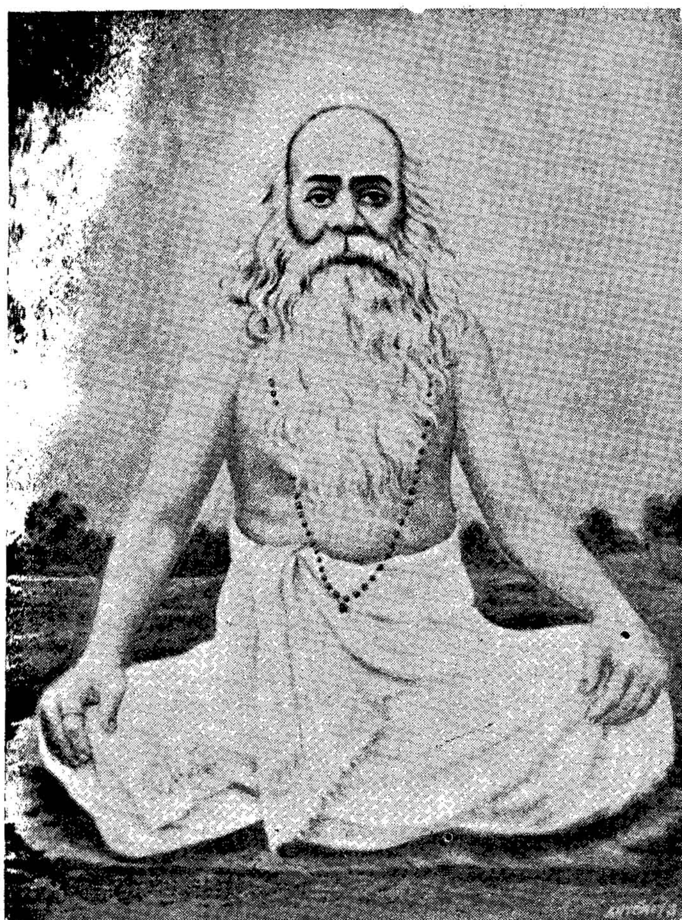
That One he knows, knowing which nothing remains unknown.

He sees Him in all and all in Him.

And his soul, like the never-setting sun, sheds peace and truth and love on all that lives.

P. G. N. P.

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CHATTAMBI SWAMIGAL

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I. CHILDHOOD

The future sage was born on 11 Chingam 1029 M. E. (1853 A. D.) at Kollur, a village on the outskirts of Trivandrum. Among his ancestors were several illustrious scholars, saints and siddhas. His father was an impecunious Brahmin named Vasudeva Sarma, and his mother Nankadevi of Ulloorkot House. He was the eldest son of his parents. Though he was named Ayyappan, he was called, and later known as, Kunjan. Even as a boy the burden of supporting his family fell on him. He used to make garlands of flowers picked in the neighbouring forests, and take them to the Kollur temple. He would gather vegetables that grew wild in marshy places for the women-folk of the Kollur *Madom* and get as payment some cooked rice and a little salt and chillies.

He had no means of attending a school. He learned the Malayalam alphabet from his father. In the evenings he used to peruse the books of boys who attended the village school and he thus learned to read Malayalam and Tamil. Kunjan made it his daily habit to overhear the lessons which a Sanskrit teacher taught the Brahmin boys of the *Madom*. One day the

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teacher came to know of his surreptitious attempts at educating himself. Impressed by the high standard of the young aspirant's attainments, he allowed him to attend his classes. Thus Kunjan achieved considerable proficiency in Sanskrit.

His thirst for knowledge and his aptitude for study prompted a near relative of his to send him to a school kept by Raman Pillai Asan in Pettai in Trivandrum. Here he won the good will and confidence of his teacher so that he was made the 'Chattambi' or the Monitor who in the absence of the teacher took his place. This appellation stuck to him and even today he is known by it. The studies at his school were by no means exacting. His reading of the Ramayana in a voice charged with devotion and his melodious musical extemporizations thrilled his hearers. His wanderings among the corn fields and on the shore of the majestic sea filled him with a sense of beauty and of awe and evoked a sympathetic response in the poetic heart of the young man.

During this period he was often missing from the Asan's house at nights. The Asan was distressed by the suspicion that the youth was being tempted to vice. One night he organized a search party consisting of his pupils. They searched for him at all the neighbouring houses. At last they found him seated near the idol of a

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dilapidated Kali temple. He was in such a deep trance that he was quite oblivious of the torch-light party looking with astonishment at him.

It was also during this period that Kunjan Pillai showed openly his utter disregard of the inhibitions of casteism. At a time when it was deemed a criminal act of heterodoxy for a Nair to dine in the house of an Eazhava, Kunjan Pillai consorted with members of the latter community and scandalized public opinion by taking his meals at the house of one Parameswaran, the elder brother of Dr. Pappu who later became a well-known social reformer.

An insatiable thirst for knowledge and a memory that knew not what it was to forget distinguished this young prodigy. Very early in life he developed a distaste for light literature. His fellow-feeling embraced all living creatures. If he unconsciously hurt even a worm a stricken conscience kept him sleepless for nights. For all physical exercises and games he had an unusual aptitude. His taste for music was instinctive. Music absorbed him so fully as to make him forget himself and his surroundings. He could himself sing ravishingly. His skill in rendering rare *ragas* was remarkable. He was an enthusiast of *kathakali* and he mastered all the *mudras* of that highly complicated art. His skill in

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painting was also of no mean order though lack of facilities prevented him from developing it. But the fine arts were not adequate to contain his interests or gratify his spiritual needs. He wanted to unravel the mystery of life, to get behind the seen reality and discover the invisible truth. To this end he studied *vedanta* through the ancient works in Malayalam and Tamil. But he realised that true enlightenment could come only through the guidance of a *guru*. His heart yearned in agony for such a master.

He conned the face of every saffron-clad Sanyasi who passed along the road, sometimes he followed him for a long distance. One day he saw an aged *sadhu* with clotted hair sitting in meditation in the Kollur temple. Kunjan Pillai attended on him for several days. When the venerable man was about to leave the place, the young disciple prayed for some spiritual advice. The Sanyasi, favourably impressed by the devotion of Kunjan Pillai, taught him the *Balasubramanya mantra*. After days of due *vrita* when he mastered this *Mantra*, he felt himself, and appeared to others, a different man. A new vigour and zeal energized his heart and the transformation manifested itself in some new powers that he felt and exercised. Children's ailments were cured by him by the application of *bhasma*. His aid was sought to exorcise evil spirits. He

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assumed the name of Shanmughadasa and an overwhelming desire to lead the life of a *sanyasi* was kindled in his heart.

II. EDUCATION

But the claims of the world were not to be discarded easily. Hunger could not be dispelled by *vedanta.* A starving mother could not live on spiritual sustenance. Kunjan Pillai had therefore to work for wages. And the seeker after esoteric knowledge had to do hard labour like a common coolie. He used to say in later days that in the construction of the imposing Secretariat buildings, now towering over the city of Trivandrum, he had a share—carrying loads of bricks and sand!

But this was not for long. His relation Krishna Pillai took him with him to Neyyattinkarai. Here Kunjan Pillai became a writer of documents. He was so generous that he used to share his wages with less fortunate members of the profession. Later he went with Krishna Pillai to Bhoothapandi where also he worked as a document writer. Here he learned to read with facility manuscript *grandhas* in Tamil. But finding the strong winds that blew there intolerable, he went back to Neyyattinkarai. To the potential seer and sage writing documents was irksome

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drudgery and he therefore returned to Trivandrum.

About this time Kunjan Pillai had the opportunity of serving the Government. Sir T. Madhava Rayar, the then Dewan, decided to recruit some clerks (Kanakkapillais) to the Huzur Cutchery. The Dewan assigned some sums in Arithmetic to the candidates. Next day every one of them presented himself before the Dewan with all correct answers. He ascertained from them that Kunjan Pillai had worked out the sums for all of them. The Dewan therefore sent for him and put him to a severe test. With the aid of his fingers he made all the calculations correctly. The astonished Dewan appointed him as a *Kanakkapillai* on Rs. 4 per mensem. At the end of the month, the salary was raised to Rs. 10 in recognition of his extraordinary abilities. But the fair-minded youth returned the 6 rupees explaining that he deserved only four.

Chattambi did not long remain a Government servant. An overbearing superior officer refused to grant him leave for a few days. "I must see you in your seat tomorrow," he roared. "You will see me in that seat only when I choose to occupy it," he replied. He was never again seen in that seat.

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He now joined an organization whose members met periodically at Pettai to discuss religious questions and to conduct music lessons. The reputed Professor Sundaram Pillai who was then a college student was a member of this society Here was an opportunity for Kunjan Pillai to get to know in detail the philosophical classics in English. Ayyavu, the Manager of the Residency, used to deliver lectures on *vedanta* to the society. From him Kunjan Pillai learned *yogasanas.* He soon became an adept in the performance of every *asana* and an expert wrestler. From Ayyavu he also gained an introduction to the modes of *vedantic* thoughts in the Tamil classics.

Tamil had a special fascination for Chattambi. To one who had no knowledge of ancient Tamil, the classics of that language remained a closed book. This knowledge he was able to acquire with the help of Swaminatha Desikar who was Tamil lecturer in the college at Trivandrum. Realising that the Tamil language was the fountain head of all knowledge, he mastered all the great masterpieces of ancient Tamil literature. This engendered in him an eager desire to go to Tamilnad. Desikar introduced him to the great Tamil Scholar Subba Jatapathi who had come to Trivandrum to participate in a *sadas* (seminar) of eminent scholars. At the end of the *sadas* Kunjan Pillai was overwhelmed with joy and

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gratification when the Tamil savant invited him to accompany him to his birth place Kalladakurichi.

This was a turning point in his life. Subba Jatavallabhar, as the great scholar was known in his own village, was a Telegu Brahmin whose ancestors had migrated to Tamilnad and settled down at Kalladakurichi In Disputation, Grammar and Vedanta, Jatavallabhar had no equal, and his house was the place of pilgrimage of the most eminent men of the country. It was in the congenial atmosphere of this place that Chattambi acquired his deep and extensive mastery of all the *sastras* in Tamil and Sanskrit. In a neighbouring house resided a Yogi who excelled in yogic practices. From him Chattambi learned all the yogic practices prevalent in Tamilnad. In Kalladakurichi again he became an expert in playing on all the musical instruments then in use. The three or four years he spent at Kalladakurichi laid the firm foundations of his future greatness, and when he bid farewell to Jatavallabhar and returned home the disciple had nothing more to learn from his revered *Guru.*

On his way home he spent some days at Maruthwamala in solitary meditation, without food. He also met a *siddha* from whom he learned *marma vidya* and yoga sastra, and a

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Thangal (Muslim saint) who initiated him into the main tenets of Mohammedanism.

But although Chattambi had ranged freely over a wide area of spiritual knowledge, he had yet to find a proper *guru* from whom he could learn the way to enlightenment. Even this rare fortune came to him before long. At Vadiviswaram he saw an aged beggar merrily licking the remnants of food from the leaves thrown away after a feast. Around him were a pack of street curs with whom he shared the refuse. The proceedings roused the interest of some mischievous boys who reacted by raining stones on the old man. But he ignored the missiles that fell on him, and continued his fellowship with his canine brethren. The docile obedience of the dogs convinced Chattambi that the old man had some strange power. He looked intently at him, and the beggar noticing it got up and walked away. When Kunjan Pillai followed him, he quickened his pace. As Chattambi started running, the beggar entered a thick forest and disappeared. The helpless and disappointed youth fell down in a swoon.

The old man noticed the spiritual light that gleamed on his pursuer's face. He knew that the young aspirant was fit to receive his mystic advice. The sage picked up the unconscious youth and communicated to him the effluence of

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his divine virtue. When Chattambi came under the touch of the holy man he saw before him a luminous halo of super-mundane effulgence. The spiritually enfranchised sage blessed Chattambi by initiating him into the divine mystery through the *Pranava Manthra*.

III. TOWARDS THE STATUS OF SIDDHA

It was a transformed and reformed Chattambi that returned home after his sojourn in Tamiland. Not even the faintest shadow of worldliness overhung his heart. He was completely untouched by the sexual urge that plays havoc with people in warm-blooded adolescence and youth. Mental and spiritual edification was the shining goal towards which he winged his flight. He renounced all worldly comforts and led the austere life of a *sanyasi*. This spiritual pre-eminence received due recognition and he commanded respect wherever he appeared.

About this time Chattambi received a permanent asylum in Trivandrum. He had a distant relative named Kesava Pillai who was an Overseer in the Public Works Department. His wife was afflicted by two incurable diseases—epilepsy and a stomach ailment. The family was in the depths of despair. Hearing that Chattambi had returned to Trivandrum as a *siddha* he took him to his

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house Kallu Veedu. Chattambi was usually reluctant to resort to the aid of *mantra*, but here he was confronted with a situation in which he could not but use his powers. With a simple rite he cured the lady of all her complaints and blessed her with what was really a new life. The grateful family looked upon their deliverer as a visible god and Kallu Veedu thereafter became his own house. But for occasional nocturnal trips to neighbouring places, mainly in search of rare manuscripts, Kallu Veedu remained his residence at Trivandrum.

Chattambi Swami's reputation as a *siddha* who cured incurable diseases soon spread. Reports became current that a snake that bit him died and that he could tame animals and make them obey him. But he was himself more zealous in widening the horizon of his knowledge than in working miracles. He got an opportunity to study *Thanthra Sastra*. In the house of the well-known *Thanthris*, the Potties of Koopakkara, there was a fine collection of *grandhas* dealing with *manthras* and the rites and ceremonies connected with temple functions. Chattambi read all of them and took notes from them. These proved of use to him in later life.

When his official duties compelled Kesava Pillai to move from Trivandrum to Vamanapuram,

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Chattambi accompanied the family. Kesava Pillai used to get for the Swami's use costly books from Calcutta, Kasi and other places. Swamiji also conducted researches in folk songs, legends and topography, and in the pursuit of these studies he explored the places around. During this period he enriched his knowledge of *Manthravada*, *Ayurveda* and Astrology. It was also now that the *Kalpa Seva* which he commenced at Maruthwamala was completed. There was hardly any green leaf which he did not taste. This led to his being called "Goat Kunjan Pillai" by the local people.

But the most memorable event of this time was his meeting with Sri Narayana Guru (1058 M. E. or 1882 A.D.). This Eazhava youth had then returned to his native place Chempazhanthi after his studies in Sanskrit. He was already a world-enfranchised spiritualist. His relatives trying to turn him back to the world trapped him into a hasty marriage. Although he went through the forms of the ceremony, he was not diverted from his purpose by the lure of feminine charm. He remained firm in his resolve to pursue yoga and vedanta. A casual meeting between Narayanan-asan and Chattambiswami drew them powerfully to each other and a strong attachment was soon formed between them. The Swami initiated him into all the occult lore which he had mastered

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in the course of years. The ground had already been prepared and the seeds of yoga did not take long to germinate and grow luxuriantly in Asan. The pair then began their wanderings on foot in the southern regions, shunning the haunts of men. They spent several days on sublime mountain heights and impenetrable forests, feeding on roots and berries, drinking from streams and springs, living in caves, consorting with wild animals and practising austere meditation and yoga. There were times of complete isolation from the world of men.

On their way back from the wanderings, one day they reached the spot at which the River Neyyar joins the sea. They decided to explore the course of the river along its arid bed. As they went up some distance, they reached a place called Aruvippuram. They were greatly attracted by this beautiful spot. It was eminently suitable for rest and contemplation. Narayana Guruswami made a mental note of the possibilities of this place as the scene of future activities. He stayed there for some time engrossed in *tapas*. But Chattambiswamigal moved about in Trivandrum and Nedumangad.

At Trivandrum, two classmates of Narayanaguru, Perunnelli Krishnan Vaidyan and Velutheri Kesavan Vaidyan, became the disciples of

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Swamiji. Their houses were his abodes during his stay in Trivandrum. Sometimes Narayanaguru himself would join them. In poetic composition, vedantic discussions and physical exercises the convivial group fleeted their time. As the oldest and most scholarly of them, Chattambi Swamigal was the natural leader of this genial band. He used to say that "Kitten (Krishnan) and Kesavan were his two wings," and that it was to make a poet of them that the *S*wami himself donned the garb of the poet. But after the departure of the young men he said he never soared on the wings of poesy.

It was not in poetic exercises only that Swamiji trained his young disciples. He was a master of the art of wrestling and he taught them the thrusts and feints of this art. His consorting with Eazhavas and his interdining with them scandalized the members of his own community. But Swamiji recognized no caste distinctions and he was as free in the kitchen of Perunelli house as in that of Kalluveedu.

IV. TRAVELS

Swamiji soon got an opportunity to show his ability to control any animal. He was invited one day to dine at the house of an officer. He

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accepted the invitation — on condition that he should be allowed to bring with him some of his disciples. The vain officer readily agreed, it gave him an occasion to display his pomp and power. Swamiji, on his part, wanted to humble the haughty and corrupt officer.

On the appointed day, the Swami arrived alone. To the officer's enquiry his host replied that his disciples were waiting outside, and he asked the meal to be served. When the leaves were laid and the food served, a pack of stray dogs entered as though in obedience to the Swami's instructions, and sat before the leaves and commenced their meal. The curs that were habitually quarrelsome conducted themselves in an unusually disciplined way. To his host who viewed the scene with astonishment Swamiji said: "These dogs were high officers in their last life. Corruption, oppression, plunder and other heinous crimes of which they were guilty then have led to their being re-born as dogs. The wages of sin are sure to be paid in the next life if not in this."

With the transfer of Overseer Kesava Pillai to Moovattupuzha, Swamiji got the opportunity of visiting North Travancore. With headquarters at Moovattupuzha he visited Ettumanoor, Meenachil, Vaikam, Perumbavoor, Edappalli

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and other places. The temple and its premises at Ettumanoor specially fascinated him, and through his efforts a *Bhajana Madam* was started near the western gate of the temple. It became a centre of devotional singing and music and prayer. Sometimes Nanuasan joined him at Ettumanoor. It was during their excursions to the neighbouring places that Nanuguru noted the place in Edappadi where he later installed a *mayilvahana*.

Swamiji delighted in bathing in the Meenachil river. He would come to the river early in the morning and return before the sun grew warm. He used to practise a kind of "enema"to cleanse his bowels. Sitting in foot-deep water he would draw in water into the stomach by *pranayamam* and after half an hour expel it. It was in the interest of health that he used to do this, and he did not like to make a public exhibition of the practice.

At the Ettumanoor temple he once demonstrated in an extraordinary way his extraordinary skill as a drummer. The *utsavam* was in progress and all the drummers and other instrumentalists were getting ready to begin the *mela*. Among the drummers was a celebrated expert called Muntomepilli Marar. Chattambi Swamigal observed a very old man with a drum and worn out drum

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sticks. He was obviously no more than a dummy, one who could just move his hands up and down without the energy demanded of a player on this exacting percussion instrument. Promising to pay him his wages, Swamigal seized the instrument from him and stood with the drummers in the front row. The *mela* began. All the instrumentalists vied with one another in the demonstration of their skill. Muntomepilli, finding in the stranger one who seemed to have come to put his skill to trial, employed all his wizardry to establish his superiority over Chattambi Swamigal. But the Swami not only held his own against his famous rival but even launched on some highly imaginative and original improvisations. The vast audience was thrilled. At the end of the *mela*, Muntomepilli approached Swamigal in great respect and asked him where he had learned his art. "I did not learn it anywhere in particular," replied Swamiji. "By the grace of my *Guru* I learned something, and I just thought that I would try what I could do. That is all."

On another occasion, when the *Sree bhootha bali* was being performed at Ettumanoor by a famous *thanthri*, the *thimila* was not being played properly. Thereupon Swamiji took

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over the instrument from the erring artiste, and played it correctly and felicitously to the entire satisfaction of the *thanthri* and the audience.

During this period his mother passed away. His father had predeceased her. Swamigal nursed his mother during her last illness. There after he never again set foot in his house.

It was about this time that he wrote his *Christhumathanirupanam* (a review of Christianity). His deep knowledge of the subject of his treatise is evident to every reader. He had read and mastered a large number of books in order to write this work. In the study of books written in English he was aided by his friend Professor Sundaram Pillai. The 21 page summing up of the essence of Christianity has received the unanimous plaudits of Christian priests.

V. IN NORTH TRAVANCORE

As his Overseer friend had made Moovattupuzha his place of permanent residence, Swamiji also stayed there for a considerable period. His fame spread over the northern Taluqs of Travancore and he attracted scholars of *vedanta* and spiritualists from the countries around. He

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also travelled frequently between Alwaye and Trivandrum.

His stay at Moovattupuzha is notable because it was here that his first acquaintance with his favourite disciple Nilakanta Theerathapada Swamigal began. Nilakanta Theerthapada belonged to an affluent family in the village of Maradi in Moovattupuzha. He was brought up in the lap of luxury. Yet from his earliest years he was remarkable for his piety, his devotion to duty and his openness of mind. After his primary education he joined the English High School at Ernakulam. During this time he also acquired proficiency in the treatment of snake bite and in *mantras.* It was soon evident to his relatives that he was more interested in meditation and *vedanta* than in his academic studies and they encouraged him in his laudable pursuits. He also assiduously studied Sanskrit and cultivated his natural taste for poetic composition.

During this period Chattambi Swamigal was staying in a house belonging to Theerthapada. His yogic powers and his discourses on *vedanta* attracted a large number of devotees to the house. His marvellous power of summoning snakes and making them obey his will became a topic of common talk in the locality. Theerthapada also presented himself before Swamigal with the object

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of enhancing his knowledge of snake lore. Swamigal soon noticed the exceptional gifts of the youth and decided that he was fit to be guided along the right path. The young man was equally impressed by the Swamiji and he longed to win the honour of becoming his disciple. Swamiji expressed a profound truth in an apparently humorous way when he told the young aspirant for spiritual enlightenment that it was far more important to eradicate the poison in one's own inside than to extract the poison of snake-bite. Under the Swamiji's guidance Theerthapada began the study of vedantic works. This led to the discontinuation of his English education and he entered on a new and illuminating exploration of the higher realms of the theory and practice of Yoga.

The training of his new disciple did not however keep him confined to Moovattupuzha. He went to Vaikam, Perumpavoor, Alwaye, Edappalli and Ernakulam. At Alwaye he was always a welcome guest at the house of Pappu Pillai, Superintendent of Police, father of Nanthiar Veetil Parameswaran Pillai. At Kalur, Kantan Vaidyan had the honour of extending his hospitality to Swamiji. At Ernakulam, Swamiji was the congenial companion of some of the highest officials and he was received as a member of thier

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own family by Chandulal, a Rajput Police Superintendent, his wife and children.

It was during his stay at Ernakulam that Swamiji got the opportunity of meeting Swami Vivekananda. This took place in the month of Vrischigam in the year 1068 M. E. (1892 A.D.), at the residence of Rama Iyer, the Dewan Secretary, who was himself a great admirer of Chattambi Swamigal. The two great *sanyasins* spoke in Sanskrit. Swami Vivekananda introduced the topic of '*Chinmudra*' into the discussion, and the illuminating way in which Chattambi Swamigal discoursed on the subject enabled Swami Vivekananda to have a glimpse of '*Kerala Pratibha*'. They had another edifying discussion the next day. Swami Vivekananda is reported to have described Chattambi Swamigal as a "wonderful man."

It was not our Swami's habit to stay for long in one place. And so he left Ernakulam and went to Vaikam, Shertallai and other places. At Kulasekharamangalam he made the Eazhava house of 'Puttanal' his home for some days. Sree Narayanaguru was also present here for a time. 'Puttanal' was the meeting place of a band of physicians, and Swamiji was acknowledged as the dominating figure in this galaxy of *Ayurvedic* experts and scholars. An incident which happened

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at this time bears testimony to the mystic powers that he undoubtedly possessed.

A ferocious Shencotta dog belonging to the Excise Inspector of the place broke loose and was a terror to the whole neighbourhood, biting and wounding a number of people. The owner found that he had no alternative but to shoot the animal dead. As it was tearing a ram and feasting on its flesh the Inspector climbed a tree and was getting ready to shoot the dog. A large number of people collected and stood at a safe distance. Hearing about this, Swamiji came out of 'Puttanal' with some of his associates, saying, "Let us have a look at this dog. Has not a man more mental strength than a dog?" He left his companions at a distance and proceeded towards the dog. The animal pounced ferociously on the Swamiji. The crowd yelled in terror at the prospect of the Swamiji being torn to pieces. But the next moment the astonished crowd saw Swamiji smilingly humming a tune and walking up and down, leading the dog by the ear.

Swamiji moved from place to place. He stayed at Shertallai, Thuravur and Parur. During these peregrinations he met Padmanabha Panicker, then a boy, who followed the Swamiji like a shadow and served him with the utmost devotion in his last days. At Parur, in 1075 M. E. (1900

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A. D.) he accepted Paramahamsa Swamigal as his disciple and took him up several steps in the ladder of spiritual and yogic lore. Among his favourite admirers was Achuthan Vaidyan of Cherai in whose house he was frequently a very welcome and honoured guest.

VI. "PARACHINA MALAYALAM"

While Swamiji was sojourning in North Travancore a new light appeared in the social horizon in South Travancore. This was in the form of an attempt at raising the Nayar and Eazhava Communities. The leaders of these movements of reform were C. Krishna Pillai and Sree Narayana Guru respectively. The divided leadership of the Nayars hampered the efforts of C. Krishna Pillai while the Eazhavas acknowledged Guruswami as their undisputed leader and united themselves into a well-knit community under the auspices of the Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam.

An effort was made by the Nayars to bring Chattambi Swamigal into the arena of social reform. But he was unwilling to take up the leadership of a community that had lost its moorings and he left the task of organizing the Nayars to Sri Nilakanta Theerthapadar. In

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response to the insistent requests of his disciples and admirers, Swamiji however agreed to place at the disposal of the Nayar community the benefit of his deep and extensive scholarship and research and his wide and varied experience. His contribution in this field is the work entitled *Prachina Malayalam.*

On this work he was engaged for several years. In the course of his travels, when he found it convenient, he would write a few pages at a time at one place. These pages he would leave to his disciples there to copy out and preserve. It was in this way that he wrote at several places and several periods the three parts of *Prachina Malayalam.*

The absence of a complete copy in the author's possession made it difficult to publish the series of chapters that make up the whole work. Only Part I of the book has been printed. By examining the ancient history of Kerala he aimed at establishing the pre-eminent position which the Nayars enjoyed in this country. In the Second Part the author's thesis is that the Nambudiri, Embran and Potti are really Nayars. In the third part he intended to give to the public all the ancient *granthas* which he could collect.

Citing several old classics, Swamiji contends that Malayala Bhoomi belonged to Nayars and

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not to the Malayali Brahmins who are really settlers from outside.

VII. WAY OF LIFE

A broad and *bhasma*-marked forehead, brows expressing undaunted courage, eyes overflowing with humanity and compassion, a face that bespoke friendliness and amiability, a beautiful, flowing, silvery beard, a broad and muscular chest, long hands, speech that was sweet and pregnant with meaning, soft murmured melodies —there is a living picture of Swamiji Add a loin cloth, a ring made of iron and an old umbrella— you complete his accoutrements.

He had no home or intimate personal friends of his own. The world was his family, all living things his brothers. He flitted about from place to place like the carefree singing birds. He was equally happy in the houses of the affluent as in the huts of the poor. But of one thing he was particular – he would not eat food cooked in a kitchen which prepared non-vegetarian dishes. Equally strong was his dislike of alcoholic liquor, and he availed himself of every opportunity to condemn the vice of drinking.

He lived a life of austere simplicity. He studiously avoided luxury and ostentation. His

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refusal to accept the hospitality of Sri Sankaran Tampi, the Maharaja's favourite, and of Dewan Rajagopalachari is famous. Accustomed to starvation in his early days, he had no difficulty in forgoing food for days. Wherever he was, he would share his food with ants, dogs or cats, and they would somehow gather round him at meal-time.

He slept on a simple coir cot or on the bare floor. He was only particular about fresh air and ventilation. As he used no saffron robes and other marks of saintliness, he looked no different from a rustic. He had a lively sense of humour and he rippled with hearty laughter at his own jokes. The playful names by which he addressed his associates were enjoyed by them.

He ignored all distinctions of caste. In the pursuit of his studies he had consorted with Muslims and Channans. He made many Eazhava homes his own. One day when he went to Perunnelli house the women were husking paddy. He collected all the pestles from them and himself completed their work for them in a short time. He used to address Sri Narayanaguru affectionately as 'My Nanan' and Kumaranasan as 'my darling Kumaran'.

The world's greatest men have all been fond of children. Swamiji's relationship with boys and

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girls was unique. His ability to call together a world of children, to immerse them in a flood of joy and, at the same time, to keep them in complete control was something marvellous. He drew towards him even peevish and shy children. His fondling touch cured them of their frowardness. He would organize impromptu programmes that would stimulate their intelligence and exercise their bodies. They would dance on his back or swing on his beard. One day he kept some leading notabilities waiting for an hour, for he was playing with the children and he would not disappoint the little ones by interrupting their enjoyment to meet the grown-ups. The women of the houses where he was received were also full of respect and regard for him.

He was very considerate to all his associates. He took care to see that those who accompanied him on his tours and visits were as well treated by his hosts as he himself was. He was very skilful in opening the eyes of foolish people to their folly. A greedy man once associated himself with Swamiji with the object of learning the art of transmuting copper into gold. One day the master and the disciple were crossing the ferry at Arukutti in a small canoe. There was a squall and the canoe capsized throwing both of them into the deep water. Swamiji knew swimming

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but his companion did not. The latter made desperate efforts to keep himself afloat. Swamiji now offered to teach him the secret of turning base metals into gold. But the drowning man cried out that he only wanted to save his life. Swamiji thereupon helped him to reach the shore in safety.

His indifference to wealth was well-known. Even when travelling on foot he did not burden himself with any money. Whatever money was essential was left with his companions. 90 acres of forest land which were registered in his name were promptly gifted away by him to his disciple Padmanabha Panicker. He was a strict Brahmachari. From his tender years he conquered all carnal desires and this enhanced his physical and spiritual strength. He despised all publicity. Perhaps this would explain why he established no order and founded no institution to propagate his teachings. Among his leading disciples were Sri Narayanaguru Swamigal, Sri Nilakantatheertha Swamigal, and Theerthapadaparamahamsa Swamigal, and many people sought spiritual counsel from them instead of from Chattambi Swamigal himself. These and numerous other disciples of Swamiji made a significant contribution to the social and spiritual reform of the people of Kerala.

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VIII. AFTER SASHTIPURTI

Swamigal was approaching his sixtieth year. His disciples and admirers were keen on celebrating the occasion. The contemplated celebration was not one of ostentation and extravagance, this would not have been countenanced by Swamiji. Their intention was to open an *ashram* as the centre of spiritual instruction and training. It was Theerthapada Swamigal who took the lead in this effort. He thought Ezhumattur a most beautiful and suitable site for the location of the *ashram*. Vatakke Koikkal Anujan Ramavarma Tampuran generously donated for the purpose two excellent buildings constructed in the modern style and the land on which they were situated.

Swamiji's *sashtiabdapurthi* fell on the 8th of Chingam 1089 (1913 A. D.). Ezhumattur was crowded with the devotees of Swamiji. At a simple meeting presided over by Swami Dayananda, speakers expressed their respect and admiration for Swamiji. Honours were showered, and the title of 'Vidyadhiraja • Theerthapada Paramabhattara' conferred, on Swamiji by distinguished scholars. Though Swamiji, in his usual humility, said that he preferred to be known by the old name "Chattambi", thenceforth he is known as "Vidyadhiraja" and also as "Paramabhattara Swami". A volume entitled

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'Sashtipurthiprasasthi' containing verses wishing long life to Swamiji was released on the occasion. At the end of the meeting Swamiji declared open the 'Paramabhattarasramam'. He also founded a *sanyasi parampara* under the name of 'Theerthapadasampradayam.' Its aim was to propagate the methods of Yogagnana in accordance with the culture of Kerala and the *ashram* was to be its headquarters.

In response to the earnest solicitations of the Vadakkekoil Thampurans and Paramahamsa Swamigal, Swamiji rested for a few days at the *ashram*. He led a life of peace and tranquillity befitting a *sanyasi*. There was sweet music both vocal and instrumental. The wild growth around the *ashram* was zealously cleared and every effort was made to make Swamiji's life comfortable.

But the *ashram* did not produce the expected result. In course of time the working of the *ashram* proved to be a failure. The absence of selfless workers was probably the reason for this. Swamiji was not able to stay permanently there. With Paramahamsa Swamigal away on his travels and Nilakantathirthapadar making Karunagappalli the place of his permanent residence the affairs of the *ashram* slumped.

About this time there arose an unfortunate controversy as to whether Swamiji was the *guru*

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of Sri Narayanaguru Swami. This is an undisputed fact acknowledged unequivocally by both the Swamis. Sri Narayana Guruswami has, in two significant verses in epigrammatic style, expressed his great respect and admiration for his deceased Guru :—

"सर्वज्ञ ऋषिरुत्क्रान्तः
सद्गुरुः शुकवर्त्मना
आभाति परमव्योम्नि
परिपूर्णकलानिधिः

लीलया कालमधिकं
नीत्वाऽन्ते स महाप्रभुः
निस्वं वपुः समुत्सृज्य
स्वं ब्रह्मवपुरास्थितः"

"The all-knowing seer the *Sadguru* has flown up along the track of Suka. He shines in the highest firmament in the plenitude of his aesthetic lustre, like the full moon. The great master, after spending his days in *leela*, has attained his inherent Brahma entity, after discarding his mortal frame in the end."

Nevertheless an attempt was made by some people to deny this fact. The *guru* and the disciple wisely desisted from taking any part in

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this unseemly dispute. For, really, each has a glory that is independent of the other.

The fire of another conflict that had the possibility of growing into a conflagration was fortunately extinguished in time. In the introduction to his *Mokshapradeepam*, Brahmanandaswami championed *yogamarga* at the expense of *gnanamarga*. In response to the persistent solicitations of his disciples Chattambi Swamigal wrote a refutation which he had the generosity to withhold from publication at the request of the disciples and well-wishers of Brahmananda Swamigal. The refutation is not a mere refutation, it is a 'vignanakosam' a work that establishes the greatness of 'gnana'.

IX. VEDADHIKARA-NIRUPANAM

Till recent times scholarship was considered the monopoly of Brahmins. It is therefore no wonder that the study and the teaching of the Vedas were the close preserve of the members of that community. Among the few non-Brahmins who had dared to trespass into forbidden ground was Thunchath Gurupadar. Chattambi Swamigal was filled with a firm determination to break into the citadel of orthodoxy and establish the right of every one to

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study the Vedas. He had spent years in making himself conversant with sacred books and the culture of ancient times. His *Vedadhikaraniru-panam* was a work capable of being published in two or three volumes. Of this treatise, written by him in pencil, we have got only a part in book form. The rest of the book has been lost to us.

The traditional view was that Brahmins can learn and teach the *vedas*, Kshathriyas and Vaisyas can only learn them, and Sudras can neither learn nor teach them. Swamiji has successfully exposed the error of this view with abundant evidence cited from ancient books.

Besides *Vedadhikaranirupanam*, Swamiji has written several treatises discussing the philosophy of Advaita. Entering the field of Advaita through the gateway of Sankara's exposition Swamiji traverses the entire area and reaches the utmost bounds of this esoteric realm. The facility with which he elucidates the most subtle and complex metaphysical problems is really admirable.

About this time happened an incident that deeply grieved him who was above grief and joy. It was the passing away of his dear disciple Sri Nilakantathirthapadar. Swamiji received the painful news when he was enjoying a musical

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concert. He started at once for Karunagappalli. He was profoundly moved to see the lifeless body set in a sitting posture. Gently patting the head of his disciple he mused aloud, "A great world created by Brahma has dissolved. It was the custom for him to stand before me and for me to sit. Today I am standing and he is sitting."

X. THE MASTER OF ALL ARTS

Swamiji belonged to an age in which any one might study astrology, Ayurveda, magic. But Veda, Vedanta and Grammar were the close preserve of the higher castes. Swamiji was one who encroached into this forbidden territory and astonished and thrilled Kerala.

Swamiji's unparalleled mastery of diverse fields of knowledge was the outcome of his capacity for remembering what he had learned. This rare gift was inborn, not acquired. It was smelted and purified by his *yogasiddhi* and it thus attained perfection. Mahakavi Kotungallur Kochunni Thampuran has observed that he understood the extent to which human intelligence could be developed and perfected from the conversation between Swamiji and Kaikulangara Rama Warrier.

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His ability to reproduce from memory what he had heard just once was tested by Puthezhath Narayana Menon. Swamiji did not know English. Narayana Menon read twelve lines from an English book. Swamiji reproduced correctly seven lines (although they were no more than unintelligible sounds to him), when he was interrupted by the arrival of a guest.

For Swamiji all learning was only a refreshing of his memory. There was a uniqueness in the way in which he cleared the doubts of others. He had an original and telling reply to every question. He could read a deep meaning even into the simplest nursery rhymes. His knowledge of Nyaya, Vyakarana, Vedanta, Meemamsa, Elakkanam etc. was thorough and impeccable. Arrogant scholars who tried to test him were themselves brought to their knees. In criticism and discussion none could get the better of him. He had mastered every nook and corner of Tharkasastra. His lucid and facile exposition in Malayalam entitled *Tharkarahasyaratnam* was well known to many of his disciples, but it is unfortunately lost to us.

There was no field of scholarship which he had not explored and conquered. In Astrology, Vaidyam and Mantravada his knowledge was profound. His gift of prediction and prophecy

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was divine. Athough he was an expert Mantravadi he was averse to practising the art. In the rites of Mantravada he was known to have banned the sacrifice of animals and to have suggested the use of cucumber in their place. A master of the theory and practice of Ayurveda, he had a thorough knowledge of medicinal plants and was an adept at curing all ailments by the use of simple herbs. He had secret specifics for small-pox, cholera, epilepsy, malaria etc. There are living today those who can bear witness to the wonderful efficacy of his prescriptions. But he practised medicine only in response to pressing solicitations. What fully fascinated and engrossed his mind were literature and music.

He was a versatile artist, but his favourite art was music. He was not only a singer but also a composer. His skill in playing on any instrument with orginality was well-known. Among the instruments which he played with especial proficiency were percussion instruments like the *Chenda*, *Maddalam*, *Udukku*, *Mridangam* and *Edakka*, *Villu*, *Thappu*, *Pandi*, *Nanthuni*, *Thumburu* and *Ginjira*. He would enthral his listeners by the way in which he rendered songs in the Telugu, Carnatic and Desya styles. To keep time he required no other aid than the iron ring on his finger. At concerts it was torture for him to hear *apasruti* or *avathala*.

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He could play on the drum with a *Kunni-kkuru* placed on the outer palm of his hand, and he was capable of evoking exquisite music by deftly running his fingers over the strings of the *Edakka*. His favourite accompaniment (instrument) was the *Ginjira*, and some Brahmins and some Pathans from other parts of India have marvelled at the deftness of his hand in playing this instrument. One day the celebrated *Thakil* specialist visited Swamiji. Swamiji's demonstration of his skill in playing on the *Ginjira* so astonished him that he exclaimed, "Swamiji is *Murugan* himself."

If he could get a copper pot, he would place it on his stomach and start drumming on it. He could produce sounds like those of the *Jalathar-anga*. His voice was low and pleasing. In music he had not only taste but scientific knowledge and practical skill. He dealt with musical instruments as though they were live things. Those who have witnessed the scene of Swamiji enthralling his audience with a world of sounds of his own creation recapture it even today with rapture.

Swamiji was equally interested in acting. His proficiency in rendering *Kathakali* songs and acting scenes with originality has received high praise from experts. He did not develop his skill in the art of painting.

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He is not famous as a man of letters. Literary grace is often adversely affected by the depth of thought characteristic of all his writings. His poems and writings are the offspring of necessity and external compulsion. He was ready to write only when he could not help it. To scribble on bits of paper in the course of his travels was his method of literary creation. It was unusual for him to follow any prescribed programme of work or write on any set subject.

His compositions have come out in the various forms of single stanzas, bhajana songs, articles, reviews and letters. Although endowed with an inborn literary taste, he did hardly anything to promote or develop it. His isolated single stanzas of verse have a beauty arising from the combination of felicitous and polished words. His bhajana songs have a rare melody and a sweetness of diction. His articles are usually incomplete, *Sarvamatasamarasyam*, *Punarjanmanirupanam*, and *Adibhasha* are among his longer works. *Sri Chakra Pooja Kalpam* is an interpretative treatise. The variety that is represented by these works illustrates the width and comprehensiveness of his scholarship. They are informative and serve to enhance our knowledge. His *Christumatanirupanam* and *Mokshapradipa Khandanam* could not be considered works of great

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value. But *Vedadhikaranirupanam* is a notable contribution to critical literature.

When we think of his literary work his letters could not be ignored. Though his apostrophes etc. have a taint of exaggeration they are really only a reflection of his guileless nature. His handwriting has a special beauty. The letters are arranged neatly without one flowing into another.

Swamiji's works have contributed to the development of Kerala culture. They served to let the tide of Hindu spiritual influence rise. It is not a beauty-worshipping man of letters that we see in his works but a seeker after truth, a revolutionary and sweet singer. The sense of duty that our ancient works have transmitted to us has been endowed with a beauty and brightness by Swamiji's works. Strength and purity of language, persuasive power and depth of thought give his works a pre-eminent place in the literature of scholarship and culture

He has also a high place among the research workers. His researches were not merely in the field of language. Even in geographical research he was greatly interested. With no more equipment than a pencil stump and a few sheets of paper torn from a schoolboy's note book he would launch daringly into the obscure regions

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of the history of Kerala and the Dravidian languages. The materials were all stored up in the vast treasure house of his memory. Folk songs, local customs, historical stories were all safely preserved in unparalleled profusion and clearness in his retentive mind. He had the gift of investigating every problem with complete objectivity and thoroughness of detail, and of getting at the central truth. His *Pracheena Malayalam* and *Adi Bhasha* are a precious mine of information to research workers.

Adi Bhasha was written in Tamil and he had it translated into Malayalam by Pannisseri Nanu Pillai. In it he has quoted liberally from rare Tamil manuscripts. He has established that the continent to the west of Ceylon was the place where animal life originated and that the first language to be evolved was Dravidam. Although Swamiji's conclusions are controversial the firmness with which he has established them brooks no denial. Swamiji has also studied the origin of place names. His researches in this field have led to many new and original conclusions. But unfortunately this work has not been preserved for us.

He was indeed the fountain-head of all knowledge. It is said that there was nothing that he did not know, that he had in fact known

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everything. Like the rainbow which blends and radiates all colours in ravishing harmony, so his shining intelligence absorbed and reflected the essence of all arts. But he was too modest to display and, unfortunately, others were not eager to draw out of him, the many-splendoured treasures of his knowledge. Well has he observed: "Knowledge is madness to the world; the world is madness to knowledge."

XI. DIVINITY

The divine power which sages and saints have acquired is a manifestation of the inner beauty of their deep and broad minds. They are most reluctant to display their spiritual power. If on rare occasions they are unavoidably compelled to show it, their intention is not to win credit or impress others.

The spiritual powers that Chattambi Swamigal had mastered were innumerable, but he was ever averse to manifesting them. If at times they had to be exercised he did not want to focus the attention of others on them. He himself would not speak about them. Our knowledge of them is, therefore, confined to the reports of eyewitnesses. Among those who were blessed by their association with him and those who had witnessed with astonishment his miraculous performances

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some are still living. We shall just note down the accounts given by a few of these eyewitnesses.

Payappallil Karunakaran Pillai says: "Swamigal used often to rest in my house when he came to Parur. He used to stay in the *patippura*. It was about the year 1070 (1895 A. D.). I had brought a timepiece from Bombay. It was then a rare object. During day time it used to be kept in the *patippura*. At night it would be taken into the house. One night when Swamigal was in the *patippura* I wished to take the timepiece into the house. He used to sleep with all the doors open. As I was afraid that it might be stolen, I thought of removing it to the house. But he assured me that when he was there nothing would be stolen. Therefore I left the timepiece there and went into the house to sleep. Intending to test Swamigal, I woke up long before day break and went to the *patippura*. There I found him sound asleep. I tried to remove the timepiece. But wonder of wonders! The moment my hand touched the timepiece I was paralysed as though by an electric shock. I was unable to take my hand off the timepiece or to leave the place. I was rooted to the spot. Soon Swamiji woke up and saw me standing tied down to the timepiece. "You need not have tested me; you can now leave," he said. That very moment my hand was released from the timepiece. He

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revealed then that he had the power of binding any object to any place."

One day he was on his way from Kaloor to Alwaye with two disciples. When he had reached the spot in front of the church at Edappalli, his progress was interrupted by a band of young men who were drunk. But he was never in the habit of retreating. Asking his companions to hold him by the back, he held his stick horizontally in front of him and with bated breath he bounced forward. Those who felt the touch of the stick fell to the ground. Thus he continued his journey without difficulty. It was only the next day on his way back, after he had administered the counter stroke, that the ruffians were able to get up and move away.

One night Swamiji found himself in the midst of a group of Nair rowdies who were practised wrestlers. Finding no other means of escaping from the place he flung himself about with agility. Every one of them measured his length on the ground. By the time they were able to get up they saw him standing at a distance. They fell at his feet in worship.

He had an unparalleled knowledge of *marmayoga* (science of the vital spots of the body) with a demonstration of which he used to keep his audience spellbound. He had again an

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astonishing control over the animal world. Wild and cruel animals, snakes and other creeping creatures would obey his orders in docility. Karumpuvilakam Govinda Pillai once accompanied Swamiji to Malayattur. As they were standing by the side of the river, they heard a loud hissing sound. They soon heard the sound of a large frog splashing into the water. Pursuing it was a terrible cobra with its large hood spread out. Govinda Pillai was stricken with terror. Swamiji ordered the serpent impatiently, "You there, don't touch it, away." The serpent which was hardly three paces away from Swamiji's feet, instantly folded its hood and crept away slowly.

Another incident is reported by Mavelikkara G. Krishna Pillai. One Sunday evening Swamiji was on his way to the temple. Behind him wålked magistrate Andy Pillai, G. Krishna Pillai and a few others. A *chera* (rat-snake) which was being pelted with stones by some boys crept fast in front of Swamiji. Andy Pillai was frightened and he pointed it out to Swamiji. "You are so afraid of a *chera*?" he said, and he at once sat down before the snake and extended his hand. "Come, son! do not be afraid, come," he said kindly to the terrified snake. It lifted its head slowly, crept towards him, licked his hand and wound itself round the extended hand. After a few moments Swamiji got up and helped it over

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the mud wall on one side of the road. "Never hurt animals," he said to his companions; "if you love them truly they will also love you."

Even wild animals became docile before Swamiji. Once a man from Parur reached the newly cultivated area in Kodanad. Swamiji was out in the open. His disciple and the newcomer set out in search of Swamiji towards the hill side to the south. From the hill top, looking around, they saw Swamigal facing a terrible tiger in the southern valley. Their fear and anxiety were indescribable. To save their lives they climbed up a neighbouring tree and remained there trembling and helplessly watching what was happening. They heard him saying something to the tiger. A little later they saw the animal turning and walking away into the teak forest while Swamiji began to climb up the hill. He had really pacified with the gestures of his hand and sent away the tiger which had pounced upon a cow. In the deep forests of Kodanad, Swamiji had encountered tigers on several occasions.

Frogs, ants and squirrels used to gather round him. Sri K. Nanu Pillai who visited him in his residence at Kodanad found in his room a large number of frogs of different sizes and colours. They were hopping about in his room:

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some were sitting on his mat and in his easy chair. To the surprised visitor Swamiji explained, "All these are my friends. They are unable to range freely in the open. There are many heartless creatures in the holes in the veranda and in the thickets around which would swallow them up. They have therefore sought shelter near me."

It was certain that he used to exchange ideas with ants. Sometimes they used to cover his feet like socks. He would then carry on a happy conversation with them. There are many still living who have seen squirrels receiving food from his hands. Rats would obey his call. At Mavelikara a new lace upper cloth of Magistrate Andi Pillai was nibbled by rats. Swamiji's trial of the case was novel. "Children, come on," he said. A large number of rats presented themselves before him. "Who among you is guilty of having destroyed this upper cloth?" he asked them. A small rat acknowledged the crime by nodding its head. Swamiji ordered some plantains to be brought. He gave each rat a plantain. He admonished them not to repeat the mistake and sent them away happy. There are many in Mavelikkara who bear witness to this incident.

When Swamiji was staying at Irinjalakuda in the house of Thachudaya Kaimal, he was found missing from his room. The room was locked

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from inside. On a close examination Swamiji was found sticking close to the ceiling like a cock-roach. It was believed that he was practising control of breath. On the Ambalapuzha beach he is reported to have dug himself under the sands in one place and emerged at some other place. On the Malayattur river his disciples are said to have seen Swamiji seated on the surface of the water in Padmasana.

Occasions there were when the forces of nature themselves were known to have yielded to his wish. Edathil Narayana Pillai has this account to give: "Once I took Swamiji to Cranganore. It was in the rainy season of the year 1091 (1916 A. D.). On our way back to Parur we were travelling in a small country boat. With us was a friend of mine. The boatman was an inexperienced Christian, Kochu Devassy. When we reached Azhikode backwater, complete darkness enveloped us. High winds and waves rocked the little boat. The boatman lost his bearings and aimlessly punted the boat for a short time. Then in utter desperation he gave up all efforts and sat half dead at the helm. He was stricken with terror and nothing would rouse him from his stupor. My companion and I also were ready to die. Swamiji alone remained unmoved, humming a tune. My friend cried out to Swamiji

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and bewailed that such a fate should overtake the venerable sage too.

"In the mean time the boat was drifting speedily towards the sea. We were not far from the place where the backwater joins the sea. My friend and I prepared ourselves for our last journey, and we called out to Swamiji. Swamiji assured us that there would be no danger. Although we had great faith in his power to work wonders, in the face of the imminent disaster threatening us, we were not reassured, and for ten minutes we remained in an agony of anxiety and suspense. And then there appeared a light. Against the current and the pull of the ebbtide, the boat, with no one directing its movement, reached the front door of the temple at Moothakuṅnam. It was really a great marvel that the unguided boat drifted against the current and covered a distance of two miles from Azhikode, the place where the Periyar joins the sea, to Moothakunnam temple."

Swamiji was endowed with great physical strength. Puliyanat Padmanabha Pillai of Perumbavur describes an intersting incident which illustrates it. One day a native of Guruvayur named Velappa Menon, who was vain of his prowess in swimming, riding and other out door exercises, compelled Swamiji to compete with him in a

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swimming contest. They were to swim from one side of a large tank to the opposite side and return to the place from where they started. As the tank was very large Swamiji suggested that the race might be restricted to one crossing. But Menon insisted on doing it both ways. The race began with Menon in front and Swamiji following. Swamiji completed the crossing once and as he was half way across on the return journey Menon was floundering in the water without even having reached the opposite bank. He was completely exhausted and beginning to gulp in water. Swamiji then went to his rescue and holding him with one hand swam back to the starting place. The crowd of spectators enjoyd the scene, and Menon hung his head in shame and begged forgiveness of Swamiji.

Siddhas recognize one another. One day Swamiji was taking an evening walk with Thalavadi Krishna Pillai. In the course of the walk one who looked like a mad man approached Swamiji, caressed and saluted him, and shed tears. When the walk was continued the puzzled Krishna Pillai sought from Swamiji an explanation of the strange scene he had witnessed. Swamiji tried to make light of the incident and evade an explanation. But on Krishna Pillai's insistence he confided that the stranger was a

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great *gnani* and *mahatma*, that his *samadhi* was to take place at one o'clock the next day, and the greeting and the tears were an expression of his happiness over the forthcoming event. Next day at the appointed hour the incident happened.

Many are the recorded instances of the miracles Swamiji performed. But they are not to be used as a measure of his spiritual greatness.

XII. MESSAGE

Swamiji belonged to the rare band of religious leaders and world benefactors who live a selfless life in the midst of the common people. They master the mysteries of life and disseminate their blessed experiences among the people for their benefit. They set an example for others to follow and they raise the moral aud spiritual standards of the society in which they live.

Although his leonine look and his fiery eloquence made him appear like an unassailable fortress to the common man, he was in reality a common man among common men. True, he did not work from an established centre or set forth to serve his fellow beings. But the society and the world that stood aloft in his imagination was a universal family of man without the barriers of caste or creed. Amidst the communal storms

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that raged around him he stood unmoved and tranquil like the Himalayas. His heart overflowed with love for all created things. He was as guileless as a child and his nature was sweet and gentle. He shunned publicity and the lime light. His ability to pierce the depths of the human mind and discover its closest secrets was unparalleled. He succeeded in enriching the lives of those around him with the treasures of his cultured mind and personality.

With his abundant love for all, he created a new era in spiritual regeneration. The horizon of his love extended to the utmost bounds of creation. The humblest creatures like dogs and ants were his brothers. His greeting of an old friend was this: "How are our old comrades the ants? are they still there? That army of dark creatures used to mass themselves around me to share my meal. I used to entertain them all grandly." He would address his musical instruments affectionately as though they were animate things. Of an old *mridangam* he spoke thus: "It is long since I have had any news of our old Agastya. This old man has a great longing to see him once more." *Ahimsa* was an ideal which he worshipped as the highest duty. He detested the killing of animals and the eating of meat. When the cart driver whipped his bullock on the road, Swamiji felt such acute pain himself that he

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rubbed his own sides to relieve the anguish. He would not offer worship at the Devi temple at Cranganore, because he considered the place a shambles. His endeavour was to re-establish *Ahimsa* in a *himsa*-ridden world. He believed that the state of plenitude of *Ahimsa* was salvation.

Swamiji sowed the seeds of revolution in the fields of belief and custom in Kerala. He emboldened non-Brahmins to range freely in the prohibited areas of scholarship. He himself learned the sastras of Thanthra and Manthra of which no one had heard, and he helped others to enter these realms of new knowledge. It was his encouragement that enabled Sri Nilakanta thirthapadar to write *Devarchapaddhathi*. Swamiji also endeavoured to dispel the ignorance of the Malayali in the great truths of Vedanta by his lucid interpretation of them. Few Malayalis have laboured harder than Chattambi Swamigal to enable the people of this country to break the chains of hereditary evil customs, to enhance their self-respect and enrich their lives. He tried to break down the communal barriers that divided people and to instil the ideal of a casteless society. For this he became the target of attack not only of orthodoxy but even of the ordinary members of his own Nair community. The world was his family. His ideal of a new social structure com-

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posed of all mankind united by the bond of love has since his time gained much ground. He shook the people of Kerala out of their moral and mental lethargy and gave them the message of *Ahimsa* and universal love.

XIII. MAHA SAMADHI

After the *samadhi* of Nilakantathirthapadar Swamiji did not settle down in any particular place. He desired to rest somewhere and continue his studies of ancient manuscripts. But no generous persons volunteered to take him in hand and make use of the opportunity for the exercise of his extraordinary talents. The scraps of paper on which he had scribbled matters of great importance got lost in the hands of people who had received them.

One of the resting places of Swamiji during the evening of his life was in Irinjalakuda. Thathampilli Kunjunni Menon and his wife, Minakshi Amma, became his humble disciples and thereafter their house became the congenial meeting place of like minded people. His arrival at Irinjalakuda was a blessing to Thachudaya Kaimal also. This Nair chief who was installed as the representative of God was one of the principal disciples of Nilakanta Theerthapadar.

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It was now the responsibility of Kaimal to continue the *Sadguru* magazine begun by Theerthapadar, and Swamigal felt compelled to help him. Under the pen name of 'Agasthyan' he contributed to *Sadguru* articles like 'Sareerathathuva sastram' and 'Desanamangal'. Many prominent people of central Kerala visited Swamiji and received his blessings and advice.

As though to renew his old acquaintance, he visited Ernakulam, Parur, Alwaye, Perumbavur, Vaikam, Alleppey and Mavelikara and reached Karunagappalli. He rested for some days at the residences of Vazhathotathu Velu Pillai and Panmana Kumbalathu Sanku Pillai. While staying at Kumbalath, Swamiji used to spend his time at a neighbouring *sarpakavu.* Sri Sanku Pillai writes: "There was another *kavu* to the east of the temple where Swamiji used to rest. He told me one day, 'We must go to that *kavu* and see it.' Very early next morning he woke me up. If he was afraid of anything it was the heat of the sun, which made him avoid travel by day. So we went to the *Kavu* very early. He said to me, 'This is a very ancient and sacred *kavu.* It would be good to make this place my samadhi.'

"A few days later he started for Trivandrum. 'I shall return after bidding farewell to all,' he said. As he started he told me, '*Karanavar*, the

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old man will come back here to die.' (He used to call me '*Karanavar*' affectionately in the presence of others.)"

Sanku Pillai was one of Swamiji's greatest *sishyas* in his last days. It was not surprising that this spirited and dutiful young man should be the apple of his eye. Swamiji used to call him his '*ponninkudam*' (darling). And Kumbalam worshipped him. Although he does not claim to have received any message or divine advice from him, he deemed it a great blessing to be in Swamiji's presence.

All the infirmities of old age now attacked Swamiji's body which the practice of yoga had made very strong. He had frequent bouts of diarrhoea and he realized that his end was near. He reminded his disciples that all the ills that the flesh is destined to endure have to be endured before the soul would secure its release. His disciples Theerthapa Paramahamsa Swamigal and Padmanabha Panicker remained beside Swamigal, solicitously attending on him. Although he could command every convenience and the best medical aid at Trivandrum, Swamiji desired to return to Panmana. He informed Kumbalam of his wish.

As soon as be received the letter, Kumbalam arrived at Trivandrum with a boat. As the boat moved from the jetty at Chakkai, he told his

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disciples. "I shall not be able to see the sun in Edavam [June]." As he stroked his stately beard and bade farewell to his native place and his comrades, the band of his admirers greeted him for the last time with bowed heads.

On the way, Kumbalam insisted on Swamiji resting for some days in the bungalow at Thottuvayal in Prakulam. People thronged to Thottuvayal on hearing the news of his illness. Ignoring his own old age, Sri Narayanaguru Swamigal came to Swamiji and enquired after his health. The scene is thus described by Kottinattu Narayana Pillai:

"Sri Narayana Guru Swamigal arrived at Thottuvayal. Sri Chattambi Swamigal was lying in a sofa in a room on the first floor. He insisted on his visitor sitting on the sofa. We watched the scene of this great meeting with interest. The lively and high flown discussion of this trinity (including Theertha padaparamahamsa Swamigal) lasting for two and a half hours enthralled us. Sri Narayana Guruswamigal gladly accepted Swamiji's suggestion that he should rest there that night and leave only the next day. In order not to disturb Swamiji we went at night to the adjoining room. Swamigal told Sri Narayana Guruswamigal that the title of Asan's *Karuna*

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would strike one as appropriate if one were to hear the poem recited by Pannisseri Nanu Pillai. He then called upon Nanu Pillai to recite the poem The new way in which the poem was rendered pleased every one greatly. The meeting of the divinely gifted personages and their followers was a rare occasion and it took us far into the night."

Compelled by his disciples Swamiji agreed to have a photograph of himself taken on that day. To pose for a photograph, to speak at public meetings, to write to the press, to accept the leadership of any movement—these were distasteful to him. In response to the wish of others he had for the first time agreed to pose for a photograph on his sixtieth birthday. For the second and the last time in his life he now allowed himself to be photographed. On either side of him sat Srinarayana Guruswamigal and Theerthapadaparamahamsa Swamigal.

Swamiji wanted to live quietly in a quiet place. He therefore insisted on going to Panmana. He reached Panmana by boat. In a short time he made the C. P. P. Reading Room his refuge. Even when his condition had begun to cause anxiety, he maintained his high spirits and cheerfulness. One day Sri Thayyil Krishna Pillai went into the Reading Room. The doors were closed

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and Swamiji was alone inside. Below his cot lay coiled a yellow *chera* and near it a big frog was sitting quite unperturbed. When Krishna Pillai told Swamiji about them he said. "If you open the door for them they will go out." As Krishna Pillai opened the door, the snake slowly unwound itself and crept out and the frog hopped after it. Swamiji commented, "They come to me wherever I am. You are not my only friends."

It was at this time that the Vaikam Satyagraha was being conducted. Swamiji's interest in following the daily newspaper reports of the campaign was unequalled. He had great faith in Satyagraha. He was of the view that what was wanted was a temple entry Satyagraha. (At Vaikam the Satyagraha was for the use of the road round the temple walls by the untouchables.) Swamiji was full of praise for Messrs K. P. Kesava Menon, George Joseph, A. K. Pillai, T. K. Madhavan, Chittezhath Sanku Pillai and Chathukutti Nair for their sufferings and sacrifices. One morning, pointing to the portrait of Gandhiji and reverently folding his hands he said: "He is one of the great men now living. The picture makes it clear that his greatness will shine even more brightly in the years to come."

Many people used to come to see Swamiji and invite him to their places. On Medam, 20, 1099 (1924) two of his admirers met him and

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insisted that he should go to Quilon. Unable to turn down their request he said, "Any way wait till after the 23rd. Then I will come south." ('To go south' also means to die). That evening he called Sanku Pillai and asked him. "Karanavar, if this old man dies here what will you do?" "Everything will happen as it should with your blessings" replied Sanku Pilli. Next day he expresed his desire to have a *panka* in his room. Sanku Pillai immediately instructed Sri Thayyil Krishna Pillai to have the *panka* fixed up. But there was delay and on the 23rd morning Swamiji said: "I am not destined to enjoy the breeze from the *panka*." Those who heard the remark understood it as a reference to his proposed trip to Quilon that day.

Several people came to the reading room to have a *darsan* of Swamiji. He received all of them with his usual graciousness and he prepared all of them to return to their places before the afternoon. About noon a *Ginjira* player arrived. Swamiji made him play on the instrument and later he himself played for some time. Altogether he was more cheerful and in higher spirits than usual. In the afternoon Sanku Pillai and some others were sitting in the pandal in front of the Reading Room. Swamigal was alone in his room. A few moments after they heard the clock strike three, they heard Swamiji saying something in

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his room. Sri Thayyil Krishna Pillai went in. Swamiji said: "Call Panicker, I want to sit up." Krishna Pillai at once brought in Panicker. Together they helped him to sit up. He himself twisted his legs. His eyes turned upward and slowly they began to close. In about an hour they were closed completely. Fearing that Swamigal was worse than usual Sanku Pillai came frequently to the door and inquired how he was. Krishna Pillai and Panicker did not realize that Swamiji was entering his Samadhi. They therefore continued to reply to Sanku Pillai that Swamiji was all right. It was only when he remained completely inert for a time that they understood the truth.

Swamiji had entered eternal rest. Hearing the news people from different places came to Panmana to pay their last respects to the departed saint. At noon the next day his mortal remains were embalmed and entombed in the *kavu*. Tributes were paid to the modern Sankaracharya by the press, the poets and admirers of all communities. Laudatory verses were published in book form. Among the poets who paid their tributes were Vallathol and Ullur.

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XIV. MEMORIALS

Swamiji's disciplies wanted to raise a memorial to immortalize his name. He had expressed the desire to install the idol of Siva on the *Samadhi Peetham.* Thanks to the efforts of Sri Sanku Pillai, a temple was built and the image of Siva installed on the Mahasamadhi tomb on 3rd Meenam 1106 (1931). The temple is named Sri Balabhattarakeswara Kshetram.

The place which is of great scenic beauty has now become a centre of pilgrimage. On the National Highway, about ten miles north of Quilon is a smiling village named Edappallikotta. From Edappallikotta a small road runs through the green shady countryside. If you walk for about a mile along this road, you reach the site of Swamiji's memorial at Panmana. It stands on a slightly elevated ground with a few small tiled buildings by its side. Sri Sanku Pillai has made one of them his permanent residence. At the entrance to this site you are greeted by the statue of a boy in the act of removing a thorn from his foot, erected on the top of a stone pillar. By its side is a small building called Mahatmaji Mandir which is now used as a reception house. To the north of this building is the Sri Balabhattarakeswara temple. A small *srikoil,* a tiny *mandapam,* the *santigraha* and the *oottupura* are

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situated by its side. The spreading mango trees, the jasmine flowers starring the ground, the *chemparuthi* blossoms waving joyfully in the breeze, the singing *kuyils* and the dancing temple peacock—all these make the place a veritable rural paradise. And a perfect tranquillity prevails over the whole area.

The deity installed in the temple is Siva. Inside the *santhigraha* is the portrait of Chattmbi Swamigal with the words inscribed in large letters "MAHASAMADHI–1099". A walking stick and a *ginjira* which belonged to Swamiji are kept in the *srikoil*. The place is a veritable Santi-niketan, the abode of peace.

The temple and the *asram* by its side attract thousands of devotees every year. Mahatma Gandhi visited the *asram* in February 1934 and spent two days (19th and 20th) in meditation and *bhajan* there. The cottage specially erected for his stay is still preserved under the name of 'Mahatmaji Mandir'. Among other distinguished persons who have been attracted to the place by its sanctity are Sri Sankar Rao Dev, Sardar K. M. Panicker, Sri A. G. Thacker and Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali.

There are several institutions founded to perpetuate the memory of Swamiji. The most

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prominent among them are the Vidyadhiraja College, Vazhoor; the Chattambi Swami Memorial Abheda-asramam, Trivandrum; and the Chattambi Swami Memorial School, Panmana.

The silver jubilee of Swami's Mahasamadhi was celebrated in 1124 M. E. (1949). In 1954 Swamiji's birth centenary was celebrated in Panmana Asram in a fitting manner and the function was inaugurated by His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore. On both occasions souvenirs containing poems and essays on Swamiji's life and achievements and on religious topics were published.

The innumerable admirers of Swamiji feel that memorials commensurate with his eminence have not yet been raised. Efforts are therefore being made to collect adequate funds to put up an auditorium and to start a public library on the premises of the Panmana Asram, where facilities for research in different branches of knowledge, with special emphasis on Indian culture and philosophy could be provided.

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GLOSSARY

Page

1 Madom: maṭham. House of a Brahmana.

2 Chattambi - Caṭṭampi. monitor

3 Asan - Āśān, ācārya, a preceptor, teacher.

3 Kali - Kāḷi: a name of the goddess Durga.

Nair: Nāyar, Name of a community in Kerala, occupying a position immediately below the Brahmans.

Ezhava: Name of a community in Kerala.

Kathakali: A peculiar dance-drama of Kerala using the language of gestures in the place of dialogues.

Rāga: musical melody.

Mudra: Gesture as used in Kathakali etc.

4 Vrita: religious observance or austerity.

Sādhu: an ascetic, hermit or religious mendicant.

Bhasma: holy ashes.

5 Shanmukhadasa: vassal or devotee of Shanmukha or Skanda.

Sanyāsi: an ascetic.

5 Grandha: a cadjan-book.

7 Āsana: (Yogic) posture.

8 Śāstra: Science, system of thought.

Guru: a preceptor, teacher.

10 Pranava mantra: Omkāra.

13 Vaidyan: Physician.

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Page

16 Bhajana madam: a maṭha or house for worship, prayer etc.

Mayilvahana: Skanda having a peacock as his vāhana (vehicle).

Utsavam: festival.

Mēḷa: Playing of different kinds of musical instruments, such as the drum, cymbals, etc.

Sreebhootha bali: offering of food to the bhutas.

23 Read PRACHINA MALAYALAM: Ancient Malayalam; a historical treatise.

24 Nambudiri: Nampūtiri, Malayāla Brāhmana.

Embran: Emprāṉ. Name of a class of Brahmans originally belonging to Tulunāṭu.

Pōt'ṭ'i, a title of some Brahmans.

26 Chānnāṉ: Name of a caste in South India.

29 Sashṭipūrti: Completing sixty years of age.
Vidyadhiraja: 'a suzerain of the realm of learning;' a title of Chattambi Swami.
Theerthapada: holy feet.

Parama-bhattara: Parama (supreme) bhattara (great and venerable person).

30 Sanyasi parampara: succession or line of Sanyasins.
Ashram: hermitage.

31 Suka: a bird or the sage Suka.

Sadguru: a virtuous or noble preceptor.

32 Yoga-marga: the path of yoga.

Gnanamarga: the path of knowledge.

Yogasiddhi: yogic or spiritual accomplishments.

Mahakavi: great poet.

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Page

35 Nyāyā: system of Indian logic.

Vyakarana: grammar.

Meemamsa: Indian system of philosophy,

Elakkanam: Tamil grammar.

Vaidyam: medical system.

36 Mantravada: the art and practice of mantras.

Chenda: drum.

Maddalam, Udukku, Ginjira: various kinds of musical instruments.

Apasruti: and avathala—discord in music.

Kunnikkuru: the seed of Abrus precatorius.

38 Adibhasha: original language.

42 Patippura: gate-house.

50 Gnāni: one who has attained spiritual knowledge.

Mahatma: great soul.

Samadhi: intense abstract meditation or contemplation.

51 Ahimsa: not killing or injuring any thing.

Mridangam: a kind of musical instrument.

54 Sarpakavu: serpent grove.

Karanavar: a senior male member of a Marumakkathaya family especially of Nayars.

59 Darsan: sight interview.

Panka: fan.

61 Mandapam: pavilion

Srikoil: sanctum Sanctorum.

62 Chemparuthi: shoe-flower plant.

63 Abheda-ashram: an aśhram or hermitage founded by Swami Abhedananda in Trivandrum.

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